



CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN NEWS

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WAXMAN ATTACKS CLOSING OF F.T.C. REGIONAL OFFICE

Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Los Angeles) today attacked as anti-consumer, the Federal Trade Commission's decision to close four of its regional offices, including one in Los Angeles. 'This decision', charged Waxman "will deny millions of Californians protection from fraudulent practices and invite the unscrupulous to make their daily bread by swindling millions of dollars from Californians. The Los Angeles office of the FTC has succeeded in obtaining \$30 million dollars redress for consumers over the past ten years. It is the most active regional office investigating mail order complaints which number over 15,000 in the last six months. The rate of receipt of these complaints is now more than double that of last October."

Waxman charged "the decision to close these four FTC offices is nothing less than an attack on consumer protection and the free market." In a statement to a House subcommittee investigating the closings, Waxman asserted that the Los Angeles Regional Office has ably protected consumers and honest businesses. He noted, "over the last ten years, the Los Angeles office has obtained more than \$30 million redress, far in excess of its total budget for that period... For many businesses, the FTC's antitrust activities are a matter of life and death."

Waxman attributed the FTC's success as a watchdog to the proximity of the regional offices to the nation's marketplaces. The

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Administration voices strident cynicism over the ability of "Washington bureaucrats" to solve regional and local problems. Waxman describes this cynicism as "pure hypocrisy." As a result of the closings, the enforcement of federal laws governing the nation's second largest marketplace will be moved from its center, to Washington and San Francisco.

The Waxman statement concluded, "the Los Angeles office must remain open and fully staffed."

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